

Master Hunter - 2012-14 Hunting Season Development

Commission Policy 6005: The WDFW will develop a Master Hunter Program that provides an adequate number of hunters, with specific qualifications, to address wildlife/human interaction(s). (this statement from the policy was edited)

Master Hunter Advisory Group – Vision Statement: Develop a Corps of sportsmen dedicated to preserving the heritage of hunting by giving back to the sport, displaying the highest standards of conduct, and working to conserve wildlife habitat and hunting opportunity.

Goal: The intent of WDFW in establishing the Master Hunter program was to develop “a tool that will be employed by the Department to resolve certain human/wildlife conflict situations.” In addition, Master Hunters strive to model safe hunting practices and place the highest value on developing and maintaining excellent relationships with landowners.

1. Opportunities to utilize Master Hunters to resolve depredation issues should be actively pursued.
2. Hunts and other incentives should be sufficient to meet WDFW’s long term objectives for the program.

Objectives:

1. The primary objective of the Master Hunter hunts is the removal of targeted game species.
2. A secondary objective includes reasonable incentives to encourage safe, skilled, and ethical hunters to join and remain in the program.

Hunt Criteria:

- 1) Should not conflict or compete with recreational hunting opportunities.
- 2) Should require expertise, judgment, and professional conduct.
- 3) Should target the removal of wildlife having one or more of the following characteristics:
 - a) Are prone to cause property damage,
 - b) Are a residential nuisance,
 - c) Pose a threat to public safety,
 - d) Have physical limitations which could hinder wildlife health or survival,
 - e) May be a threat to other wildlife,

- f) The removal of wildlife that meet the previously noted criteria, regardless of sex as appropriate.
- 4) Master Hunter hunt opportunities should be based on justifiable, biologically sound data with specific hunt objectives such as removal of game species causing property damage.
- 5) Points should ultimately be eliminated for Master Hunter hunts. This allows all Master Hunters to be treated equally with respect to hunt opportunities.

Options for MH Comment

Points:

1. All applications for hunts result in points being lost each year (effectively eliminating points).
2. Divide MH hunts into two categories: with HC hunts (on call hunts) where points do not accumulate each year and other hunts (not on-call, where hunters participate based on season dates, etc) go into a separate category where points are applied (each category will require the purchase of a special permit application).